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November 19, 1977

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③ Cong. File - Harkin

Dear Tom:

Thank you for your very kind words about my meeting with the 94th and 95th New Members Caucas. It was truly a pleasure to hear your views, as well as to give you some of my own. I would like to do it again.

I attach great importance to the matter of human rights and, as you know, when I visit Argentina it will be one of the principal items on my agenda. I will let you know the results.

Thank you for your good wishes on my trip.

Sincerely,

Cy Vance

The Honorable  
Tom Harkin,  
House of Representatives.

Department of State, A/GIS/IPS/SRP

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November 2, 1977

Department of State, A/GIS/IPS/SRP

The Honorable Cyrus R. Vance  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street  
Washington, D.C. 20520

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Dear Mr. Secretary:

I want to personally thank you for taking so much of your valuable time to meet with members of the 94th and 95th New Members Caucus on Tuesday morning. I want to also thank you for being so very open and candid with us during the questioning period.

One of the members from the 95th Caucus, that is a newly-elected member, asked me as you were leaving, "Well, what do you think of Secretary Vance?" I replied, "Let me answer this way: You should have been here when Kissinger was Secretary of State. First of all, he would never have come down here to meet with us. Secondly, he probably never would have condescended to answer our questions, except in only the most general and non-committal way. And thirdly, if he had spent 15 minutes with us, it would have been amazing in itself. So as far as I am concerned, Secretary Vance is indeed a breath of fresh air in that position." Anyway, I think most of the members who were there that morning were highly impressed with your openness and candor with us.

You may recall that I brought up the point regarding your visit to Argentina. In my question I referred to a letter sent to you by Congressman Toby Moffett from Connecticut. (I am attaching a copy of that letter.) I do hope you will be able to bring up with General Videla the situation regarding the seven political prisoners named in that letter. After your return, I would certainly be interested in learning either from you or from Doug Bennet the situation on the "right of option" that General Videla says he will restore. I also understand you plan to discuss with General Videla the "disappeared people" in Argentina and what is being done to account for them. I am very interested in knowing his responses on this situation too.

Again, Mr. Secretary, thank you. I wish you all the best on your trip to Argentina.

Sincerely,



Tom Harkin  
Member of Congress

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October 28, 1977

ENCLOSURE POOR QUALITY  
RETURN TO FADRC

Dear Secretary Vance:

I am writing on behalf of seven Argentine political prisoners who will be eligible for release on November 10. The seven are Edith Staheili de Friss, Susana Pelli, Eduardo Gonzalez, Eduardo Grutsky, Ruben Piazza, and Juan Gonzalez.

All of these prisoners will complete their three-year sentences next month. They are among the first to have been arrested under state of siege provisions; all have been mistreated and several tortured during their detainment.

I am concerned that these seven prisoners will not be released at the completion of their sentences. Recently three of them have been severely punished in prison, and one disappeared for ten days during which time he was "interrogated" and tortured. The timing of this intensified harassment, and the well-documented evidence of excesses committed by the security forces, suggest that the lives and rights of these prisoners are in serious jeopardy.

In your upcoming talks with General Videla, I ask you to urge him to follow through on his promise to restore the right of option for all prisoners held under the state of siege, and to release prisoners when their sentences are completed. I ask you especially to inquire into the cases of these seven prisoners, to ensure their release.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Cordially,

Toby Moffett  
Member of Congress

Secretary of State Cyrus Vance  
2201 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Department of State, A/GS/IPS/SRP

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ACTION MEMORANDUM

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*11/18*

November 18, 1977  
Department of State, A/GIS/IPS/SRP

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TO: The Secretary  
FROM: ARA - Terence A. Todman; *jm*  
SUBJECT: Meeting with the 94th and 95th New Members  
Caucus

ISSUE FOR DECISION

Whether to sign the attached letter to Representative Tom Harkin.

ESSENTIAL FACTORS

Congressman Harkin has sent you a letter in which he thanks you for meeting with the members of the 94th and 95th New Members Caucus. He also discusses human rights in Argentina with particular interest in the situation regarding the seven political prisoners named in Congressman Toby Moffett's letter which is attached.

Recommendation:

That you sign the attached letter to Congressman Harkin.

Attachments:

1. Reply to Congressman Harkin's letter.
2. Letter from Congressman Harkin.

Drafted: ARA/ECA: JNBumpus: jc  
11/16/77: x29166: 7228435

Clearances: H: Mr. Cutter  
HA: Mr. Snyder *RL*

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